



THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

February 25, 2016

I wish I could join this incredible convening of some of the best minds in America changing the landscape of science and medicine. You're all part of a precision medicine community that's harnessing new technologies and innovations to save lives, improve care, and bring our health care system into the twenty-first century. And your work will play an important part in the new, national commitment the President asked me to lead: To make a decade's worth of advances in half the time to end cancer as we know it.

Over the last several months, I've met with hundreds of the world's top cancer researchers, doctors, and scientists. I've met with philanthropists and technology experts. I've met and spoken with countless patients and families. And they all say one common thing—we're at an inflection point that offers so much hope for the future of health care.

Until the last few years, the major thrust of cancer treatment was the removal of tumors followed by intense radiation and chemotherapy. But just in the last few years, we've moved beyond these treatments. Today, scientists and researchers—many of you here today—are creating and delivering personalized, tailored treatments based on the genomics of individual tumors. There have been amazing advances in technology, immunotherapy, virology, and combination therapies.

Just think if we could accelerate these innovations, break down the current data silos in the private sector and government, and foster new collaboration across research, medicine, philanthropy, the pharmaceutical industry, and the patient community. Think about harnessing the energy, expertise and impatience of patients themselves, who are eager to donate their data and help us pioneer new models of research that are more collaborative, open, and transparent. Think about how this could meet the critical need of expanding access to clinical trials, to ensure that novel therapies can be delivered to anyone who needs them, and connect community oncologists with a world-class cancer institute fifty miles away, helping them stay current on the latest innovation. These are my goals, and these are precision medicine's goals.

So those are the kinds of things we're trying to do, and we'll need your help. I want to hear from you. What are the major challenges moving forward? What other ideas should we consider? How can we truly seize this incredible moment that offers hope for patients and families—and that defines America's unrelenting pursuit of discovery?

I'm looking forward to seeing the President when I get back, and hearing what you've discussed today. Thank you for all that you do.

Sincerely,


Joseph R. Biden, Jr.